REMARKS

The title of the application is amended herein as discussed below.

Claims 1-8 and 10-30 are canceled herein. Claim 9 is amended and claim 31 is added as a new claim. Support for the claim amendments is found, for example, at page 39, lines 16-25, and the examples in the specification.

No new matter is presented.

I. Response to Objection to the Specification

The Examiner states the title of the invention (ANTAGONIST AND AGONIST WHICH BIND TO A STRONG BINDING SITE OF CHEMOKINE RECEPTOR) is not descriptive. The Examiner requires a new title that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

The title of the application is amended herein, thereby obviating the objection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

II. Response to Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner states that the claim should clarify that the calculations are corrected for non-specific binding in the absence of unlabeled antibody.

Claim 9 is amended herein to recite that the bound amount is corrected based on the isotype control, thereby obviating the rejection.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §112 rejection.

III. Response to Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over WO 98/18826 (Leucosite, Inc.).

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(b) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,528,625 ('625 patent).

The present invention as set forth in amended claim 9 relates to a method for measuring an occupying ratio of a compound bound to a strong binding site of CCR5 on a CCR5 expressing cell or a membrane fraction thereof.

Neither of WO '826 nor the '625 patent discloses or suggests such a method for measuring an occupying ratio of a compound bound to a strong binding site of CCR5. In general, the ligand bound to the receptor is dissociated with a lapse of time. In the present invention, in order to select a compound persistently bound to the receptor, the occupying ratio of the compound bound to the strong binding site is measured as described at page 30, line 4 to page 31, line 26 in the specification. The anti-CCR5 antibody binds to the strong binding site of CCR5 and competes against the compound bound to the strong binding site of CCR5. Thus, in the present invention, a method for efficiently finding a compound which has the above characteristics and binds to a strong binding site is constructed, so that it becomes possible to find a compound having such characteristics that a sufficient pharmacological effect can be expected therefrom.

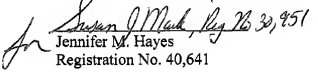
Thus, the present invention is not rendered obvious by the cited references, taken alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer M. Hayes
Registration No. 40,641

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860
WASHINGTON DC SUGHRUE/265550
65565
CUSTOMER NUMBER

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